

U.S. Department of Education
2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Mr. Dustin Mortenson

Official School Name: Sunflower Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 775 North Center
Gardner, KS 66030-1770

County: Johnson State School Code Number: 020

Telephone: (913) 856-3700 E-mail: mortensond@usd231.com

Fax: (913) 856-3790 Web URL: www.usd231.com

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Bill Gilhaus Superintendent e-mail: gilhausb@usd231.com

District Name: Gardner/Edgerton District Phone: (913) 856-2000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Ron Ragan

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 6 Elementary schools
(per district designation) 2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
9 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 10184

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	11	6	17		6	0	0	0
K	35	35	70		7	0	0	0
1	31	24	55		8	0	0	0
2	28	31	59		9	0	0	0
3	31	30	61		10	0	0	0
4	27	29	56		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								318

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
93 % White
3 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 7%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	15
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	22
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	318
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.07
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 1%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 1

Number of languages represented, not including English: 1

Specify languages:

Laotian

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22%

Total number of students who qualify: 69

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 14%

Total number of students served: 46

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>18</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>39</u>	<u>3</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 20:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	94%	96%	94%	96%	94%
Teacher turnover rate	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university

_____ %

Enrolled in a community college

_____ %

Enrolled in vocational training

_____ %

Found employment

_____ %

Military service

_____ %

Other

_____ %

Total

_____ **0%**

PART III - SUMMARY

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Constructing a strong framework requires a well-designed blueprint as a guide. As reflected in Sunflower Elementary's mission statement: Building a foundation together that supports success; our plan is designed so everyone—parents, teachers, administrators, support personnel and students—commits to the task of realizing academic prosperity. Tools of creativity and best practices help construct a culture of success and are of equal importance to the mortar that binds our brick walls together. Sunflower is an educational home with its foundation built on the cornerstone of trust, responsibility, communication and fellowship that supports a tradition of excellence.

Enter the open doors of Sunflower and the architecture reflects the building atmosphere. Academic wings branch out from a hub in the heart of the school. This area, called the commons, underpins a school tradition of fellowship and hospitality. Students, teachers, parents and the principal gather here to greet one another each morning with warm welcomes and smiling faces. The camaraderie that begins in the commons scaffolds an infrastructure with collegiality and collaboration. Here, academic goals and development of the whole child intersect and form a rock-solid footing for student achievement.

Surrounding the hub, six strong and steady pillars serve as physical supports for the building as well as pillars demonstrating of good character. Each pillar is decorated with a specific trait and spotlights students that model these important attributes. These foundational skills enable students to accomplish amazing deeds as witnessed in many student-led endeavors. Student Council, who also facilitate the school-wide recycling program, are key members of the team of greeters flanking the front doors each morning. After arriving in classrooms, students are treated to the trademark Eagle's Nest, a daily live-news broadcast production hosted by third and fourth grade students.

The academic wings extending from the hub are thresholds to excellence in education. Since 2005, Sunflower has earned all 25 Kansas Standard of Excellence designations for reading, math and science state assessments. In 2010, Sunflower was one of only two schools in Johnson County to post 100 percent proficiency on the state math assessment. Furthermore, Sunflower received the prestigious Kansas Governor's Achievement Award which honors the top five percent of all performing schools in Kansas. These accomplishments are a result of intentional efforts of staff to perpetually refine pedagogy. This sustained commitment has produced numerous staff recognitions and honors, including three district level Teachers of the Year and a Kansas Master Teacher Award. The bedrock of Sunflower's success is a district that expects and supports superior performance. Excellence is the common measure of Sunflower veterans and early career teachers alike. Three Sunflower teachers have earned the Kansas Horizon Award, a program sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education to recognize exemplary first year teachers.

Not only are the professional triumphs of the school celebrated, but they serve as tools to advance future successes. As form follows function, so do Sunflower's accolades rise from our affinity for fostering teamwork. Our mission statement emphasizes together by design. We build partnerships through Care Team meetings, grade level meetings and technology collaborations that realize results and solutions. Moreover, the fellowship among staff extends to parents and students. It is a sense of togetherness that upholds each accomplishment, every effort and all achievements.

The call to build community is our hallmark and our habit. The school year begins and ends with a faculty family gathering. This family is then blended with student families during the annual "Sneak Peek" prior to the first day of school. The connection is strengthened and continues uniting both communities together through a school-wide Learning Celebration. During this celebration, the entire school community enjoys a picnic-style lunch together and the PTO presents everyone with a school t-shirt. The kindergarten teachers nourish home-school relationships with a visit to each family's home at the beginning of the year. The school year closes with the entire Sunflower family celebrating together at the

Awards Ceremonies.

The level of parental involvement at Sunflower is significant in number and notability. Sunflower's reputation for success can be directly attributed to the partnerships with parents and families. From a thriving PTO to a progressive Watch D.O.G.S.(Dads of Great Students) program, attendance at parent-teacher conferences to classroom volunteers, Holiday Dinners to Family Math and Literacy Nights, parents step in and step up to define Sunflower as a place where everyone's role is integral to each child's success.

This promise of success is realized at Sunflower because, by design, we work together to breathe life into a two-dimensional blueprint and create a three-dimensional community that embodies the great trust and the great responsibility of excellence in education.

1. Assessment Results:

Building a foundation together that supports success is the top priority at Sunflower Elementary School. Because complacency is viewed as the true adversary, Sunflower creates an atmosphere where students thrive daily in a caring and supportive, yet rigorous environment. No Child Left Behind accountability standards have united teachers, students, and parents to continuously improve student performance. In accordance with Kansas guidelines, reading and mathematics state assessments are administered annually to 3rd and 4th grade students. These results can be accessed at <http://online.ksde.org/rcard/>.

The state of Kansas has established the following assessment performance levels: Exemplary, Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Approaches Standards and Academic Warning. Annually, Kansas requires an increasing percentage of students to score at the “Meets Standard” performance level or above on reading and math assessments. Schools that meet these expectations achieve Adequate Yearly Progress. In addition, schools that exhibit exemplary levels of performance are awarded the Standard of Excellence for extraordinary achievements. The data below highlights Sunflower’s state assessment achievements over a five year period beginning with the 2005-2006 school year and concluding with the 2009-2010 school year.

- 100% of students completed state assessments
- From 2005 to 2009, students scoring Meets Standards, Exceeds Standards, or Exemplary on the reading state assessment grew from 91.9% to 97.3% of students
- An average of 95.74% of students have scored at or above Meets Standards since 2005 on the reading state assessment
- From 2005 to 2009, students scoring Meets Standards, Exceeds Standards, or Exemplary on the math state assessment grew from 97.3% to 100% of students
- An average of 98.34% of students have scored at or above Meets Standards since 2005 on the math state assessment

The test results indicate Sunflower’s continued success as state proficiency standards have increased from 2005 to 2009. During this time, 100% of students were tested. In reading, 15% more students advanced from Meets Standards into Exceeds Standards or above. In math, 16% more students achieved the same movement. Students in the subgroup free and reduced lunches achieved greater results.

With the momentous task of working to improve student scores that are already notably strong, Sunflower teachers research and implement additional resources in an effort to meet individual needs and help students better their achievement scores. It is a significant mathematical achievement to move even one percentage point in the upper ranges of the scores. Each gain in percentage requires strategic planning and relentless desire. Conscientious preparation to refine and revisit best practices results in growth over time. Every staff member, from custodians to teachers, aides to parents, secretaries to administrators work together to support these efforts. Furthermore, students across all grade levels find ways to support each other during these assessment opportunities. Students and teachers prepare for assessments in such a manner that the mood across the building is relaxed, positive, and full of enthusiasm. It is a total school commitment to move every student across the categories.

Over the past five years, Sunflower Elementary students completed 20 state assessments in math and reading and earned the Standard of Excellence in all of them. This ratio of 20:20 indicates consistently high performances across curriculum over time. In addition, Sunflower has also met Adequate Yearly Progress each year. Sunflower students, parents and staff maintain an eye for excellence as evidenced by the 2009 assessment results. 97.3% met or exceeded the standard in reading and 100% did the same in math.

Sunflower has established a strong foundation that supports the success of students and staff. Sunflower is

accountable to state and federal standards through No Child Left Behind requirements, but more importantly, is accountable to our children – to provide the ultimate learning environment by researching and utilizing the best learning tools available in pursuit of educational excellence.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Sunflower has a strategic system of supports in place to ensure success for all learners. The first step in the system begins at each grade level. Grade level teachers talk together about students, develop curriculum together and analyze assessment data together during weekly meetings. Equipped with resource rich data (DIBELS, Fountas and Pinnell, District Quarterly Tests, informal assessments, and student work examples), open discussions explore how particular students are responding to instruction and previously implemented interventions. New ideas and teaching techniques are decided upon, developed and implemented. Classroom teachers are not the only ones tapped to implement the interventions. To accomplish agreed upon goals, students are shared among grade level teachers and other school personnel; the classroom teachers, secretaries, guidance counselor, parent volunteers, and principal are empowered and together put the plan into action.

The next step in the system occurs when the grade level interventions do not result in improved academic success ascertained by data. During scheduled bi-weekly meetings that are attended by grade level teachers, reading specialist, math specialist, special education teacher and administrator, data are reviewed by the team and ideas are brainstormed. As a result of this collaboration, further interventions are planned to better support the learner. Sunflower looks beyond the traditional school day to create flexible learning time through working breakfasts with students, extended learning after school, and increasing Tier services two additional days per week.

If the implemented interventions do not result in student progress, we proceed by adding the student to our CARE team agenda. At this level, we review all available data and implemented interventions to formulate a new plan. District wide resources such as school psychologist, occupational therapist, ELL, social worker, and the speech and language pathologist are often consulted at this stage to truly consider all new ideas in an effort to provide additional support. As a result of Sunflower's willingness to remain focused on student data, we are able to discover what students have experienced academically, research what they need instructionally, and create a path for them to travel successfully.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Communication is vital to the success of any school district. The Sunflower team understands this and diligently maintains positive and effective communication with students, parents, patrons and staff. Together, Sunflower remains steadfast in achieving excellence in the classroom – every classroom.

Communicating student performance and achievement to parents, students and the community is accomplished in a variety of ways. At the building level, teachers communicate with parents through classroom newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, PTO highlights, phone calls to home, and standards-based report cards. Parents also receive a monthly newsletter from the principal highlighting academic achievements. Communication with students happens through individual conferencing and encouraging notes. Site council presentations and Sunflower's website keep the community informed.

At the district level, multiple tools are used to communicate assessment results. Quarterly district newsletters are sent via U.S. Mail to all patrons, parents, and business owners in Gardner and Edgerton. These newsletters provide information on the subjects tested, include graphs outlining district-wide results, share outcomes for each school, and relay overall growth and success. A quarterly Superintendent's message provides an overview of the assessment results and is shared in the newsletters as well. Results are posted with links to press releases and state web sites on student achievement. Press releases sent to local media and public announcements at monthly board meetings are additional avenues of communication. An e-newsletter is sent to district employees as well as Chamber of Commerce members to link local business with the assessment results.

In 2010, the district created a comprehensive informational publication, The State of the District, to distribute community-wide. It is mailed to every resident of Gardner and Edgerton and distributed to realtors, bankers, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development professionals in the area. The publication includes district, school and individual student successes.

Sunflower and USD 231 are constantly searching for innovative ways to share information with students, parents, and the community. As new tools become available, every effort is made to incorporate up to date methods of communication. This ensures all stakeholders stay informed and invested.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The Sunflower staff has been instrumental in collaborating with other USD 231 teachers in order to share successful strategies and practices. During the summer months, educators from across the district work closely together in collaboration academies to develop lessons and units. These instructional tools are then shared district wide electronically.

An innovative element of collaboration was added to the district instructional improvement model in recent years. In an effort to share novel approaches for teaching curriculum, Sunflower teachers periodically work with instructors from the five other elementary schools and the middle school. These collaborative meetings increase consistency throughout the district and allow ideas to flow seamlessly from grade to grade. Teachers share openly about curricular practices and gain greater insight of district scope and sequence in reading and math. Common teaching vocabulary and problem solving strategies have resulted from these meetings creating congruency throughout the learning process.

Gardner Edgerton USD 231 is a growing district which employs approximately 50 new teachers each fall. Yearly, Sunflower staff make presentations at the district New Teacher Academy. This training provides a snapshot of district expectations and procedures for effective classroom practices. Newly hired teachers benefit from the wealth of ideas shared from experienced classroom teachers.

Sunflower instructors have also been privileged to provide valuable mentoring to new teachers regarding academic planning and student management procedures. The opportunities for veteran and early career teachers to exchange ideas about effective practices and new trends in teacher education benefits both and leads to improved instruction in the classroom.

The district Leadership Academy offers Sunflower another opportunity to share lessons learned. The academy is for educators who have a desire to develop as leaders. The training provides an overview of effective leadership skills with the intent to develop talent for future district endeavors. Sunflower staff participates and presents annually at this academy.

Sunflower's commitment to share lessons learned are imperative to continued success. The energy that radiates from Sunflower's learning environment coupled with the synergy that grows from sharing with other schools results in many rewarding and successful accomplishments for students and staff.

1. Curriculum:

Sunflower begins learning support throughout the core curriculum areas at an early age. The master schedule has been designed to accommodate age appropriate learning routines to ensure staff members are available to provide extra hands for reading, writing, and math instruction. This system is based on a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) structure requiring participation from the entire Sunflower staff.

Many limit the definition of school staff to only classroom teachers, but at Sunflower, school staff truly involves everyone. School secretaries, teacher aides, the guidance counselor, principal, librarian, physical education, computer, and music teachers, as well as parents are incorporated to assist students during kindergarten small group reading and math lessons. All of the group activities are planned by the classroom teachers using data collected through programs such as DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), Fountas & Pinnell, and district quarterly assessments. Sunflower also utilizes this data collection process to guide instruction in the upper grade levels.

Utilizing literacy centers during guided reading instruction is a critical part in Sunflower's curriculum. These activities incorporate explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The resources used in whole group instruction include Open Court, Words Their Way, Accelerated Reader and our newest resource, StoryTown. An engaging feature of this program is the technology component, which is accessible to students both at school and at home. Building reading specialists provide tiered reading instruction across grade levels to meet identified needs of individual students.

Sunflower's math instruction is very similar to reading instruction, in that it pulls from a variety of resources. A similar tiered support schedule is implemented for math across each grade level. Curricular resources include Growing with Math, Study Jams, and Brainpop. Another commonly implemented resource, MAPS, incorporates a kinesthetic approach to problem solving.

Science and Social Studies indicators are woven throughout other instructional subjects. This can be seen in a fourth grade guided reading center that integrates map skills with one of the Big Five Reading ideas. During Sunflower's annual Learning Celebration Day, students participate in math, science, reading and social studies activities focused around the U.S. Constitution and Character Education. Integrating these various studies allows teachers to focus their time on student learning and application.

At Sunflower, student learning extends beyond classroom instruction. To link school and home, the PTO provides each kindergartener a free book prior to their first day of school. They also provide free books on a monthly basis to Sunflower students. Sunflower emphasizes the importance of life long literacy through Novel Navigators, which incorporates parental coaches during lunch periods. Family Literacy Night brings in community story tellers and the Scholastic Book Fair promotes excitement for reading.

Students get an opportunity to use real world applications through our bi-annual Mathletics competition. They witness the importance of sustaining math skills as they compete against peers and then against their parents. An after school initiative modeled after "The Amazing Race" allows students to compete against each other while running throughout the hallways completing indicator-driven activities.

Sunflower's students participate in many musical performances throughout the year. In addition to grade level programs, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students perform for parents, staff, and upper grade level students. The fourth grade choir performs at the Mayor's Christmas Tree Ceremony and in the local Music in Our Schools concert. Sunflower also has the privilege of performing at area leisure homes, the local rehabilitation hospital, and the annual Sunflower Art Walk. All students are encouraged to participate in Sunflower's Talent Show.

The goal for physical education at Sunflower is to create an atmosphere where everyone can participate and enjoy themselves. While pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students prepare for fitness class, they also learn about the “letter of the week”. All activities are connected to the designated letter of the week through music, buzz words, and basic movements.

To promote bike safety, all district third grade students participate in the Bike Rodeo at Sunflower. Each student brings his or her bike to school and is fitted with a free helmet. The students participate in safety stations, visit the local fire, police, and EMT vehicles, and enjoy a sack lunch on the playground. The project brings awareness to the importance of safety.

Each spring and fall, all grade level students complete a fitness test. This year, a program called “Fitness Fridays” was implemented to visually measure fitness improvement throughout the year. Each week, mock tests are given. Through this program, students see results each week as they progress towards healthy fitness habits. Students are getting stronger, building confidence, and seeing their fitness improve regularly.

Sunflower’s tiered learning approach targets individual growth areas, outlines a support map, and contributes to the growth of all students. Cross curricular instruction is building wide and embraces the whole learner, ensuring each student is equipped to succeed.

2. Reading/English:

A comprehensive balanced approach to reading instruction is used at Sunflower Elementary. Diverse student needs are met at each developmental reading stage: emergent, early emergent, transitional, and fluent. High standards for achievement facilitate the goal for students to successfully use independent reading strategies and become independent life-long readers. A strong parental partnership has been built to foster the bridge between home and school.

Student data and trends are analyzed and areas for improvement are targeted. Through in-depth analysis, the need to implement an enhanced comprehensive core curriculum was identified. The research-based reading series best suited to meet the curricular need was Harcourt StoryTown. Third and fourth grade students currently use StoryTown. Kindergarten through second grade students currently use SRA Open Court, but will begin the Harcourt series in 2011-2012. The Harcourt series strengthens instruction by addressing phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing.

A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is used to impact student success. This system has three components: tiered reading instruction, progress monitoring, and on-going professional development. It is designed to meet the needs of all students and is a shared responsibility among all teachers. It ensures positive outcomes for students by providing early prevention of reading difficulties based on a structured, systematic approach.

In Tier I, all students receive at least 90 minutes of daily core instruction. During this time guided reading is incorporated to further differentiate instruction and focus on student specific skills. Guided reading groups are determined by available data (Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, DIBELS, Quarterly Assessments) and fluidity is based upon student progress.

Tier II support provides additional 30-minute interventions to students scoring below the DIBELS benchmark and/or other reading assessments. Interventions are targeted to the specific needs of students in small group settings and are implemented to address deficit areas.

Tier III support is available for students indicating an intensive need. Supplemental, customized programming is provided for an additional 30 minutes in a small group setting.

Literacy skills build and spiral each year. Effective instruction in all areas of reading and writing in a multi-tiered system ensure success for Sunflower students. Progress is monitored and data is analyzed.

Opportunities for whole and small group teaching, guided and independent practice, and remedial and enrichment lessons accommodate the diverse learning styles of all students.

3. Mathematics:

As a result of No Child Left Behind, teachers throughout Gardner Edgerton School District worked together to align the math curriculum to match new indicators. District committees were formed to decide when each concept would be introduced, taught, tested, and reinforced. Consistent vocabulary was determined, a kindergarten through sixth grade common problem solving model was adopted, and grade level cyclic reviews were created.

Gardner Edgerton teachers developed lesson plans, quarterly maps and quarterly tests. This provides each grade level teacher a road map to travel throughout the school year. Equally significant, teachers are equipped with quarterly data to plan multiple routes for students to succeed. At Sunflower, quarterly test data allows teachers to differentiate instruction and to group students using a grade level specific tiered model of support.

Additional support for Sunflower students who perform below grade level is provided by the math specialist, special education teacher, and para-professionals who work closely with classroom teachers in various co-teaching formats. Due to the trust that is prevalent at Sunflower, grade level teachers create flexible student groupings based on data and then develop and implement a systematic re-teaching plan.

In addition, Sunflower has created several opportunities to reinforce math concepts through unique measures by:

- Organizing a Winter Olympics math review in which students solve math problems then “compete” in various events. Students can be seen “skiing” with marker boards and meter sticks after successfully solving difficult word problems.
- Hosting Mathletics competitions held throughout the year to promote math literacy. Competitors work in teams to solve math problems and earn points when they are correct. One family-themed competition allows students to compete against their parents.
- Inviting families to Sunflower’s annual Family Math Night. This event encourages families to participate in activities and games that incorporate math concepts. Upon entering the commons, families have a smorgasbord of mathematical options. Tables are set with dice, playing cards, game mats, and instructions. Estimation jars filled with various objects encourage students and parents alike to guess the number of items in each jar. Computers allow families to compete in online computation challenges.

Sunflower’s efforts to continuously adapt curriculum empowers teachers and students to understand and apply a myriad of mathematical concepts.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Sunflower has cultivated essential skills by developing endless opportunities for investigating, planning, measuring, planting, growing, and maintaining the landscape outside our classroom windows.

The idea bloomed from a vision to create an outdoor classroom for student scientists to plant seeds, grow vegetables, read books, track the weather, observe wildlife, and care for the environment. In the true sense of the word together, our school garden began as a cross-pollination of Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department and the Sunflower community.

After applying for and receiving a \$3900 Toolbox for Education Grant, Sunflower decided to implement the project in phases. The first phase brought together Mary Bueher, Master Gardener and retired biology teacher, with the Sunflower staff. Mary assisted in developing a student-friendly garden plan that included a list of native plants and a detailed landscape drawing.

The next phase moved the project from plans on paper to plants in the ground. Over 200 friends of Sunflower, dressed in matching “Garden Gala” t-shirts, worked together on a Saturday morning to complete assigned team tasks. Their efforts brought to life an outdoor classroom incorporating bird, butterfly, and zero-scape gardens, raised beds, and a compost area. Teams also created a gathering spot with number, alphabet, and geometric stepping stones leading learners from space to space. Children were engaged in learning activities about nature and participated in decorating stepping stones. The gala concluded with a community meal to celebrate the realization and accomplishment of Sunflower’s first outdoor classroom.

The completion of the garden launched Sunflower’s follow up phase to connect curriculum to the outdoor learning environment. Throughout the year, students explore the garden during recess, Earth Day celebrations, May Day plantings, and story time with the principal. During colder weather, some garden projects even take place inside the building with an activity room corner hosting a grow lab and teacher resources. An all-school integrated writing project turned a hallway into a colorful and vibrant display entitled “Growing a Garden of Literacy.” A notebook of lesson plans that integrates core curriculum with garden activities is accessible to classroom teachers.

5. Instructional Methods:

Sunflower’s ability to demonstrate differentiation begins with a commitment to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of each student. The development of positive relationships transcends all matters. Striving from the earliest age to break down barriers enables Sunflower to fulfill students’ needs.

The results of early childhood screenings allow Sunflower to differentiate student academic, social, and play-based learning needs. Students develop relationships among peers and adults as they work cooperatively in data driven groups for both reading and math. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers collaborate throughout the year to ensure a seamless transition, while at the same time focusing on the development of the student’s individuality.

Sunflower continues fostering student individuality throughout first and second grades. Teachers divide social studies, writing, science and art curriculums based on expertise and interest to enhance students’ learning experience. As students become more independent, reading and math small-group instruction evolves during these critical years.

Sunflower’s investment in student relationships continues to yield dividends as the focus shifts to state assessment indicators in third and fourth grades. Teachers collaborate, analyze data, and brainstorm strategies to meet the needs of learners. This is seen in a fourth grade setting as the math specialist and special education teacher work together to develop and implement inclusive lessons.

Students who struggle socially are given opportunities to shine throughout the elementary experience. One specific example can be seen as a second grader is given the privilege of holding cue cards during Eagle’s Nest live broadcast each morning. Sunflower teachers understand how this experience will give the student confidence needed to tackle future academic challenges.

The culmination of the social, emotional, and academic journey is highlighted on the last day of school. Together the entire school community lines the hallways cheering and celebrating the achievement of each fourth grader. We know that the relationships built, academics mastered, and care received at Sunflower have prepared students to successfully enter the world of higher learning at the middle school level.

6. Professional Development:

Sunflower Elementary teachers define professional development as an active exchange of ideas and practices that lead to individual growth as well as the growth of others. We believe that through the open

sharing of ideas and evidence-based practices, together we ultimately achieve the best possible learning environment for our students.

The Sunflower Elementary Professional Development Plan includes the following goals:

- **Community and Family Involvement**
All staff will apply knowledge and skills in cultivating relationships with students, families and the community. The Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) program is one example of purposeful focus. The program not only promotes teacher growth for instruction, but reinforces our focus on the growth of student relationships in the classroom as well as outside the school. Teachers work to develop their skills in utilizing Watch D.O.G.S. to best support our students in the school setting.
- **Professionalism**
All staff will develop as informed and reflective professionals. Our school vision encourages each staff member to think and act as a catalyst for collegiality in support of constant collaboration. Additionally, we believe as professionals that we must put kids first, be positive in our support for each other, communicate with maximum effectiveness, and understand that teamwork is not a one-time performance; it's a full-time requirement at Sunflower Elementary School.
- **Technology Integration**
All staff will collaborate bi-weekly with the district technology integration specialist in order to implement dynamic, multi-modal curriculum to engage learners.
- **Curriculum and Instruction**
All staff collaborate weekly with core content specialists in order to sustain a laser like focus, continually reflect upon practices, and to seek improvement in the areas of Reading and Math instruction for all students through the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.

Sunflower Elementary professional development follows a results-based model where all activities are planned based on the identified needs of student learners. Data are monitored utilizing multiple forms including DIBELS, Fountas and Pinnell, quarterly curriculum assessments aligned to district and state indicators, as well as our annual Kansas Assessment data for each of the core tested areas. Professional development activities are planned by and for Sunflower teachers for the purpose of increasing student achievement while providing continued support to staff. The direct correlation of development activities with student achievement data allows Sunflower professionals to continue their growth with a constant and purposeful focus on student results.

7. School Leadership:

Sunflower's leadership philosophy begins with the distinction between cooperation and collaboration. Cooperation is defined as working together agreeably. Collaboration is defined as embracing others' ideas and developing a plan that best meets the needs of our learners. As differing opinions arise, a united focus brings our "family" back together with an effective plan that results in cohesiveness and respect. Through the collaborative process at Sunflower, we determine the best possible plan of action and together give 100 percent to achieve that goal.

Our principal's mission and primary responsibility is being a catalyst for collegiality. Collegiality at Sunflower is defined by the intentional focus our leadership has placed on the following four areas:

Teachers Talk Together About Students – Teachers collaboratively reflect upon students needs through a Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS), Care Team meetings, SPED meetings, and pro-active transition planning. This is especially evident in kindergarten classrooms. School personnel come together from multiple areas of expertise to lead daily small group instruction. As a result of teachers' proactive efforts to communicate student needs and learning expectations, students experience differentiated instruction. This dedication to successful early childhood development provides Sunflower students with a strong foundation as they progress.

Teachers Develop Curriculum Together - Through vertical collaboration, Sunflower's math, communication, and environment committees work together to build an exceptional learning atmosphere for all students. Committees collaborate to monitor school improvement goals. They also develop and implement learning centered family activities such as Literacy Night and Family Math Night. Horizontal collaboration is evident in bi-weekly grade level meetings. The focus includes: reviewing reading and math assessment data, aligning curriculum for indicators based upon quarterly maps, and promoting good communication among staff.

Teachers Teach Together - To maximize resources and reach students on a deeper level, it is strongly encouraged to share teaching and learning strategies with each other. Co-teaching among regular and special education teachers, co-treatment among special education service providers, teacher led professional development, and mentor coaches are examples of staff members enriching one another.

Teachers Learn Together–Sunflower recognizes the importance of learning from colleagues and provides opportunities for every teacher to observe another classroom. These observations have assisted in sharing instructional strategies and management techniques.

Our principal challenges staff members to view teammates as collaborators, not competitors. He expects and fosters supportive attitudes. Together we gain results through positive perceptions, open communication, and continuous focus.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: Kansas State Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005

Publisher: KSDE

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	100	98	97	100
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	84	83	77	74	85
Number of students tested	57	58	61	69	64
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	85	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	13	0	0	0	0
2. African American Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11KS4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Kansas State Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 Publisher: KSDE

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	97	97	97	99	91
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	83	79	73	80	64
Number of students tested	57	58	61	69	64
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	92	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	13	0	0	0	0
2. African American Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11KS4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Kansas State Assessments

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 Publisher: KSDE

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	98	96	99	94
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	93	79	66	74	58
Number of students tested	54	61	53	69	55
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	91	100	100	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	73	60	50	0
Number of students tested	0	11	10	10	0
2. African American Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11KS4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Kansas State Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 Publisher: KSDE

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	98	93	98	96	93
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	76	77	66	73	64
Number of students tested	54	61	53	69	55
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	91	90	100	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	64	70	70	0
Number of students tested	0	11	10	10	0
2. African American Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11KS4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: School Average

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	99	97	98	97
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	88	81	72	74	72
Number of students tested	111	119	114	138	119
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	94	100	95	92
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	85	72	59	47	0
Number of students tested	20	18	17	19	16
2. African American Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11KS4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: School Average

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	97	95	97	97	92
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	79	78	70	61	64
Number of students tested	111	119	114	138	119
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	100	89	94	100	100
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	90	72	65	68	0
Number of students tested	20	18	17	19	16
2. African American Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
%Meets Standard, %Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
%Exceeds Standard, %Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11KS4